



# RECOGNITION for Giving Back

Cleveland fundraisers celebrate National Philanthropy Day.

**Just look** at many of the greatest institutions and buildings in Cleveland, and you will see the names of individuals, families and companies which have considered philanthropy a passion, not just a tax write-off.

“Look at Severance Hall or University Hospitals Seidman Cancer Center,” says Ellen Brown, chair of the National Philanthropy Day Steering Committee for the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) Greater Cleveland Chapter. “But funders don’t give money to have their name on a building or to get an award. The Seidmans saw an opportunity to help support the way we care and treat cancer patients and their families.”

Professional fundraisers are a vital link between donors and recipients. Without their expertise, endless enthusiasm and skills, the amount of money raised for charities, nonprofits, schools and myriad causes would be significantly less. The International AFP, with 31,000 members, is the largest fundraising organization in

the world, according to Bob Cahen, president of the Greater Cleveland chapter’s board of directors. With 378 members, the Cleveland chapter has roots to 1960, when the national organization was founded. The current local name represents a merger of two groups in 2000.

The local AFP chapter will celebrate National Philanthropy Day Nov. 8, at the Renaissance Cleveland Hotel, and will honor philanthropists, funders and volunteers. The 2019 AFP award recipients include: Debra Hershey Guren — Outstanding Philanthropist Leadership Award; BMW of Westlake/Ganley Auto Group — Corporate Leadership Award; Reitman Family Foundation — Foundation Leadership Award; Kristen Lutjen Saada — Outstanding Fundraising Volunteer Award; and Baldwin Wallace University Jacket Philanthropy Program — Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy Award. Mike McIntyre, columnist at *The Plain Dealer* and host/producer of “The Sound of Ideas” on WCPN, is the master of ceremonies.

“The recipients deserve the recognition,” says Cahen, retired executive director of the Lakeland Foundation and former director of development for Lakeland Community College. “And, National Philanthropy Day is the best networking event I go to every year because the people who are there are the people I want to learn from.”

The event’s Morning Educational Panel will be moderated by Lindsay Marciniak, senior vice president, CCS Funding. Speakers include: Jerry Sue Thornton, president emeritus, Cuyahoga Community College; Ira Kaplan, executive chairman/executive committee member, Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan & Aronoff LLP; and Nancy McCann, philanthropist and community arts activist. The focus will be Donors, Leaders, Advisors: Advice on Engaging Board Leaders.

Education is a main focus of AFP, in addition to “elevating the fundraising profession and serving the community by promoting ethical and professional practices in philanthropy.” One of the goals of the organization is to help its members prepare for the future and be aware of changes in funders’ actions. Brown believes, for example, that “young people give differently,” and knowing how and why helps fundraisers and those they serve.

“Young people want to give to someone

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they know or give directly to a cause," says Brown. "They don't want their boss to say they have to give to a particular charity. And more people do crowdfunding now. You see it on your Facebook feed where someone's friends all chip in to give \$10 or \$20 to a charity they really care about. It's peer-to-peer. Some of the biggest (fundraising) organizations have had to adapt to that change."

Still, Brown is optimistic about fundraising in Cleveland, a city historically known as being exceptionally generous.

"Everyone has a charity or a cause they really care about — the arts, saving the planet, schools, feeding the hungry," says Brown, who in addition to being a fundraiser is the relationship manager for the Ohio Society of CPAs. "The opportunity for fundraisers is to find people who are really passionate about your cause and get them involved. Also, it's to identify people who might have a lot of money, but who are passionate about some other cause and to leave them behind. They are on a different journey."

"I call people and ask them for money. But I don't look at it that way at all. It's an opportunity to help someone find their cause and purpose in life. My organization funds college scholarships. Twenty years from now, that recipient will look back and remember that your company gave them the scholarship," she says.

Cahen would like to see joint programming involving all of the AFP chapters in northeastern Ohio. He also is interested in forming more collegiate chapters of AFP. Cahen also wants the public to be aware of the Soul of Philanthropy exhibit at the Western Reserve Historical Society's Cleveland History Center, showing now through Dec. 6. The traveling exhibit is accompanied by a local exhibit, Celebrate Those Who Give Black, which tells the story of black philanthropy in Cleveland.

"Our AFP members are smart, dedicated people across the age spectrum," says Cahen. "We have people new to the field and people who have been doing fundraising forever. Come to National Philanthropy Day to be inspired." ■

